

VZCZCXYZ0005
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #1702/01 2120913
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 310913Z JUL 07
FM AIT TAIPEI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6196
INFO RUEHB/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7076
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 8323

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 001702

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DPP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE FRANK HSIEH'S U.S. TRIP, TAIWAN'S UN BID

¶1. Summary: As DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh's U.S. trip and Taiwan's bid to join the United Nations remain in the spotlight of the Taiwan media, news coverage on July 31 focused on the rising oil prices and on the 2008 presidential poll. The pro-independence "Liberty Times," Taiwan's largest-circulation daily, ran an exclusive banner headline on page two that said "The [UN Secretariat's] Statement That Taiwan Is Part of China Is

SIPDIS

Inconsistent with the U.S. Policy and Position; the United States Will Negotiate with UN [over the Matter]." The mass-circulation "Apple Daily," in the meantime, ran a banner headline on page eight that read "Frank Hsieh: the United States Opposes [Taiwan's] UN Referendum, and the Consequences [of Taiwan's Holding such a Referendum] Is Imaginable." The sub-headline added "[Hsieh] Meets with Bian Immediately after He Returns; [Both] Infer Possible Punitive Measures from the United States."

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a "Liberty Times" op-ed said DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh should not have promised the United States that he will not hold any referendum on independence. A "Liberty Times" column said the United States has helped Taiwan so much in the past, but the article questioned why Washington is restraining Taiwan now. An editorial in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" questioned which Frank Hsieh is real, the one that calls for "reconciliation and co-existence" in Taiwan, or the one who spoke in a "cunning and caustic" manner in the United States? An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" described the current relations between Hsieh and President Chen Shui-bian as both having a "two-stage struggle," with the presidential election in March, 2008 as a dividing line. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" said, despite Hsieh's good humor and eloquence, there is no evidence showing the Hsieh has resolved the two "fundamental U.S. concerns about the DPP's pursuit of 'Taiwan identity' and 'international space.'" With regard to Taiwan's UN bid, an "Apple Daily" editorial said that Foreign Minister James Huang was lying when he said Taiwan's UN referendum will not violate President Chen's pledge not to change the island's national title. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News," on the other hand, urged President Chen to hold a "national security referendum" to defend any attempts to negate Taiwan's sovereignty. End summary.

¶3. DPP Presidential Candidate Frank Hsieh's U.S. Trip

A) "How will Frank Hsieh Amend the 'One China' Constitution?"

Luo Chih-cheng, associate professor at Department of Political Science, Soochow University opined in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] (7/31):

"... Our concern is that any promise that Taiwan leaders make to the

United States, if not cautious and comprehensive, will be used to constrain Taiwan's external relations and internal reform. Simply put, who will define a 'referendum on independence?' Over the past seven years, it has been proven that, whenever Taiwan intends to carry out any internal or external reform or push for normalization, Washington almost always scrutinizes or even opposes these by alleging that Taiwan might violate the pledges of the 'Four Nos and One Without.' Obviously, Taiwan has given the United States a ruler [as in 'twelve-inch piece of wood' - Ed.] with which to shape or even punish Taiwan.

"Even if Mr. Hsieh considers that Taiwan is already a 'de facto' country, the meaning of a 'de jure' 'constitutional one China' is that Taiwan is not a country; it is merely a part of China. Although Mr. Hsieh asserts that the unreasonableness of [Taiwan's] 'one China Constitution' should be amended, a referendum is needed to decide whether to adopt the procedure of constitutional reform or establishing a [new] constitution.

"But the problem is that if China views the 'referendum on joining the United Nations under the name of Taiwan' as a variant of an independence referendum, and while the United States has warned continuously that the 'referendum on joining the UN' violates one of the 'Four Noes' pledges, [namely] no change of the national title, then won't China and the United States assert that the referendum on constitutional reform that attempts to take out 'one China' [is] a referendum on independence? ..."

B) "A Benefactor or a Valued Customer?"

The "Free Talk" column in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 720,000] wrote (7/31):

"What is the difference between a valued customer and a benefactor? The difference is that the former pays and gets the merchandise immediately, and gets rewards in accordance with the price. The latter donates and helps out based on moral courage; and the one who U.S. TRIP, TAIWAN'S UN BID

helps feels satisfied when the one who is helped expresses any word of appreciation.

"Then what is the United States to Taiwan, a valued customer or a benefactor? There is hardly an affirmative answer to this question.

This is because the United States has been Taiwan's benefactor in an earlier period, sending forces without hesitation to help defend Taiwan and effectively constraining China from invading Taiwan when Taiwan was at its most difficult time, such as the Korean War, the 1947 shelling [of Kinmen/Quemoy], and the 1996 crisis in the Taiwan Strait.

"However, the U.S. attitude towards Taiwan seems to have changed recently. After A-bian made the pledges of 'Four Nos and One Without,' the U.S. started to consider itself as a valued customer, and has started to use Chen's pledges as an inhibiting incantation [refers to the classic picaresque novel "Journey to the West," in which the Buddhist monk Xuanzang kept the monkey king under control through a magic incantation that caused his crown to tighten on his head -- Ed.] or a chastity memorial archway [a "pailou" gate constructed to memorialize a faithful wife or mother] to demand that Taiwan not cross the line; otherwise, it will start reading the incantation and make Taiwan headache, roll on the ground, and obey.

"... Over the past few decades, the United States has helped Taiwan so much that Taiwan people have already carved the statue of this benefactor in their hearts. The most dreadful thing is if the benefactor becomes a valued customer and embarrasses the Taiwan people."

C) "Which Is the Real Frank Hsieh?"

The centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (7/31):

"... DPP presidential candidate Frank Hsieh, who has always advocated reconciliation and co-existence, has recently concluded a trip to the United States and returned to Taiwan. Hsieh emphasized that his trip was highly successful. During his trip, Hsieh has

tried every way he can, using all kinds of soothing tones, tactful and exquisite rhetoric [in communicating with Washington] in an attempt to win the United States' trust in him. Hsieh stressed to Washington that Chen Shui-bian insisted on pushing for the UN referendum, and he can neither stop nor oppose it, but he added that such a big problem will 'end by March, 2008.' In other words, [Hsieh is telling Washington that] he will not play the games Chen is playing now and, more importantly, he will not hold a referendum on unification or independence. Also, Hsieh [said he will] practice what he preaches. What Hsieh implied and did not point out directly was that Chen may not be able to practice what he preaches. ...

"Hsieh has tried the best he can to appear to be flexible and use precise rhetoric to please Uncle Sam, and evidently he cannot bother himself to care about the impact his posture and rhetoric have on [the politics] in Taiwan. Or, Hsieh is clearly aware of the positive and negative impacts his words and deeds in the United States would cause, so he chose to evade the important questions for the easy in an attempt to reduce the possible damage to the minimum. ... "

D) "March as a Dividing Line: a 'Two-Stage Struggle' between Frank Hsieh and Chen Shui-bian"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (7/31):

"Frank Hsieh just returned from a trip to the United States. A general look into the relevant remarks he made there indicate very clearly that he and Chen Shui-bian are now engaged in a 'two-stage struggle,' with March, 2008 marking a dividing line. Hsieh's story was as follows: First, the 'UN referendum' should be blamed on Chen because 'foreign affairs are within the authority of the president.'

Second, he hopes Washington will distinguish him from Chen and will not let him lose the presidential election just because of its opposition to Chen. Third, the UN referendum is not aimed at reaching a real objective but at inciting the public; in other words, it is just a campaigning ploy. Fourth, the DPP is now under the control of Chen; Hsieh cannot stop the UN referendum, or else the DPP will fall apart. Fifth, all this confusion and trouble will come to an end in March, 2008 when Hsieh is elected and Chen loses his power to dictate the issues. 'Everything will remain boisterous until May, 2008.' ...

"Hsieh divided the struggle [between himself and Chen] into 'two stages' in the hope that the United States and middle-of-the-road voters could sympathize with him in his need to forbear and act involuntarily during the first stage of campaign season, and keep hope on him regaining control in the second stage after the U.S. TRIP, TAIWAN'S UN BID

presidential election. Thus, Hsieh was telling the United States: Just let Chen cause trouble until next March, and I can domesticate him in March when I am elected! ... March is the dividing line drawn by Hsieh; it was drawn by neither the DPP, nor Chen."

E) "Chen Mars Hsieh's U.S. Trip"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" editorialized (7/31):

"... There is no evidence that despite his good humor and eloquence, Hsieh resolved the two fundamental U.S. concerns about the DPP's pursuit of 'Taiwan identity' and 'international space.' These topics are inherently provocative and therefore risky to peace in the Taiwan Strait, given the stated views and implicit threats of the PRC over the past 30 years. China is alarmed about the referendum and other steps that Chen might take in his final months in office that could challenge China's claim to sovereignty over Taiwan and compel a decision to use force against the island under Article 8 of its Anti-Secession Law."

¶4. Taiwan's UN Bid

A) "Foreign Minister Telling a Lie"

The mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 510,000] editorialized (7/31):

"... Any country attempting to join the United Nations must use its formal national name, because only sovereign states are allowed to join the world body. Why does A-Bian want to hold a referendum, since he is clearly aware that there is no hope for Taiwan to join the UN? This is because he intends to [show the public that] once the referendum on the island's UN bid under the name Taiwan gets passed, it would mean that the island has to give up the name of the Republic of China, since what says in the referendum is that Taiwan is the island's national name. Whether Taiwan can enter the UN really doesn't matter at all. But the United States has seen through his intention to change the island's national title via a referendum, so it expressed strong opposition to such a move. As a result, logically speaking, [Foreign Minister] James Huang's remarks that the referendum will not violate [Taiwan's] pledge not to change its national title is nothing but a lie."

B) "Let Our Votes Show PRC Does Not Represent Taiwan"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] (7/31):

"... In the wake of Ban's attempt to lend the U.N. credibility to Beijing's attempt to annex Taiwan, we believe President Chen had no choice whatsoever in issuing an official application to join the U.N. to reaffirm the fact that Taiwan is decidedly not represented by the PRC. If Ban and Beijing persist in the false claim the PRC represents the 23 million people of Taiwan, we believe that a public and decisive experiment to test this claim can be arranged together with the March 22 presidential election besides the DPP-sponsored referendum on whether we should join the U.N. under the name of 'Taiwan.' ..."

" Ban's statements mark a dangerous declaration by the leader of the world's international community that Taiwan's people are not represented by their own democratically elected government but by the authoritarian regime of a foreign power, a claim reminiscent of Nazi Germany dictator Adolf Hitler's claim to Austria and Czechoslovakia in the 1930s. Hence, we urge President Chen to consider calling for a 'national security' referendum to ask all of the citizens of Taiwan to vote for or against the simple question of 'do you accept that Taiwan is part of the People's Republic of China?' Such a referendum topic would not transgress any 'red line' as it would not touch on the question of 'independence of unification,' involve any 'declaration of independence,' change our national moniker or flag nor alter Taiwan's current status in any way. ..."

YOUNG